

3

Intra-Urban Mobility in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi

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Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi are the two largest urban centres in Vietnam as far as population and economic potential are concerned. In recent years, population growth has been a major factor in the economic growth of these centres. However, in both Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, the hike in population is causing critical problems in the urban development process. As these cities grow, so does the movement of people in them.

Intra-urban Movement

There has been a tremendous increase in population movement in Vietnam since 1986, when an economic liberalization policy (*Doi Moi* or Renovation) began to be implemented. Although considerable research

has already been done on the migration aspect, there is still not a clear understanding of mobility within the major centres, with a particular focus on the two largest ones, Ho Chi Minh City (overall population of 5 million with 3.7 million in the urban area in 1999¹) and Hanoi (overall population of 2.7 million with 1.5 million in the urban area). A positive migration balance from the city centres to the suburbs has been observed, based on the two most recent censuses, one conducted in 1989 and the other in 1999. There is a considerable increase in intra-urban mobility in the wake of fast-track urbanization, and this is becoming a key urban planning consideration. This evolution and the policies implemented are impacting the living space of citizens in terms of environment (suggesting improvement) and are tending to increase routine travel distances (suggesting deterioration).

Such intra-urban mobility (that taking place within the administrative limits of the two cities) includes on the one hand intra-urban migration or residential mobility (changing one's residence within the administrative limits), and on the other hand temporary mobility, including commuting movements.² This is tending to accentuate the inadequacy of urban infrastructure and transit because of increasing the density of suburban zones, which are the least affluent. Indeed, urban infrastructure work in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi is not only obsolete to a considerable extent, which has been pointed out many times previously, but also unequally distributed geographically and by force of circumstances, often non-existent in recently urbanized suburban zones.

The patterns of such internal mobility, the evolution of the daily needs of the people as a function of the modification of their living space, in a foreseeable context of strong urban growth and increased metropolising, are therefore major problems to be studied and taken into consideration in the urban planning process.

A targeted research based on a household survey

The research project on "intra-urban mobility in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi", carried out in the framework of the Urban Research Programme for Development [*Programme de Recherche Urbaine pour le Développement* (PRUD)] was a cooperative project linking the Institute for Economic Research of Ho Chi Minh City, the Population Centre of the Hanoi National Economics University (PC) and the Paris *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement* (IRD), working as a team with a comparative intent (Gubry et al. 2002, 2004 and 2008).

An original methodology using a household survey in the two metropolises of Vietnam was used in order to significantly reduce the cluster effect that was largely ignored in the past.³ Indeed, a two-tier survey approach, with a random sample including a systematic drawing, was used for the first time to deal with the very tight “division into blocks” phenomenon in the urban milieu. Tier 1 of the survey thus enabled us to take directly into consideration the blocks (*to dan pho*), much smaller in size than the wards (*phuong*) or communes (*xa*), the units immediately below the district, urban and rural respectively, which had generally been used up to the present. The list of households was then established in the field in selected blocks.⁴ The survey covered 2,000 households (8,623 people) in Ho Chi Minh City and 1,500 households (5,971 persons) in Hanoi, selected by draw at tier 2. The survey was conducted in March-April 2003.

The household survey aimed at the commuting movements and temporary comings and goings of the population, as well as migration history. It enabled information to be gathered on the characteristics of the household and the population, non-migrant and migrant households, the migration history of recent migrants, short-term travel patterns, opinions on routine travelling and future migration plans. The questionnaire associates quantitative and qualitative data. These movements are increasing in size with the very strong urban growth that is foreseeable in the two large metropolises in Vietnam in the years to come.

An additional analysis of the 1999 census results focused on migration shifts (changes of residence within the administrative limits of the two centres).

1999 Census Findings: A Population Shift to the Suburbs

The census is an irreplaceable tool for the study of migrations (changes of residence), including the smallest geographical areas, since by nature it is exhaustive, save for mistakes made in data collection. A census makes it easier to study immigration into a given zone (wherein the immigrants are concentrated) than emigration out of the same zone (which process disperses the emigrants among all the administrative units of the country, or all countries of the world for that matter).

In Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), if we take the population aged five or older in 1999, 83.7 per cent were already living in the same district in 1994, five years earlier, 6.7 per cent were living in another district of HCMC, 9.3 per cent lived in another province and 0.2 per cent abroad.

In Hanoi, the corresponding figures are as follows: 87.7 per cent of the inhabitants lived in the same district of Hanoi in 1999 as in 1994, 4.0 per cent lived in another district of Hanoi, 8.0 per cent lived in another province and 0.3 per cent abroad. Overall, the population is seen to be a little more “stable” in Hanoi, which has had a growth rate slightly lower than that of Ho Chi Minh City.

In various other countries, according to local conditions and specificities of the cities, as a rule people moving into major centres select either the downtown core or the suburbs. In Vietnam, there is a very clear trend for immigrants to prefer the districts immediately around the downtown core, both in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. In HCMC, 62.3 per cent of the immigrants between 1994 and 1999 were living in the following seven districts (in descending order, including districts that took in at least 5 per cent of the migrants): Tan Binh, Go Vap, Thu Duc, Binh Chanh, Binh Thanh, 12 and 9. Three of the five new “urban” districts (*quan*) are on this list (Thu Duc, 12 and 9). In Hanoi during the same period, 70.7 per cent of immigrants lived in the following five districts: Dong Da, Cau Giay, Hai Ba Trung, Thanh Xuan and Tu Liem. This includes two of the three new districts (Cau Giay and Thanh Xuan).

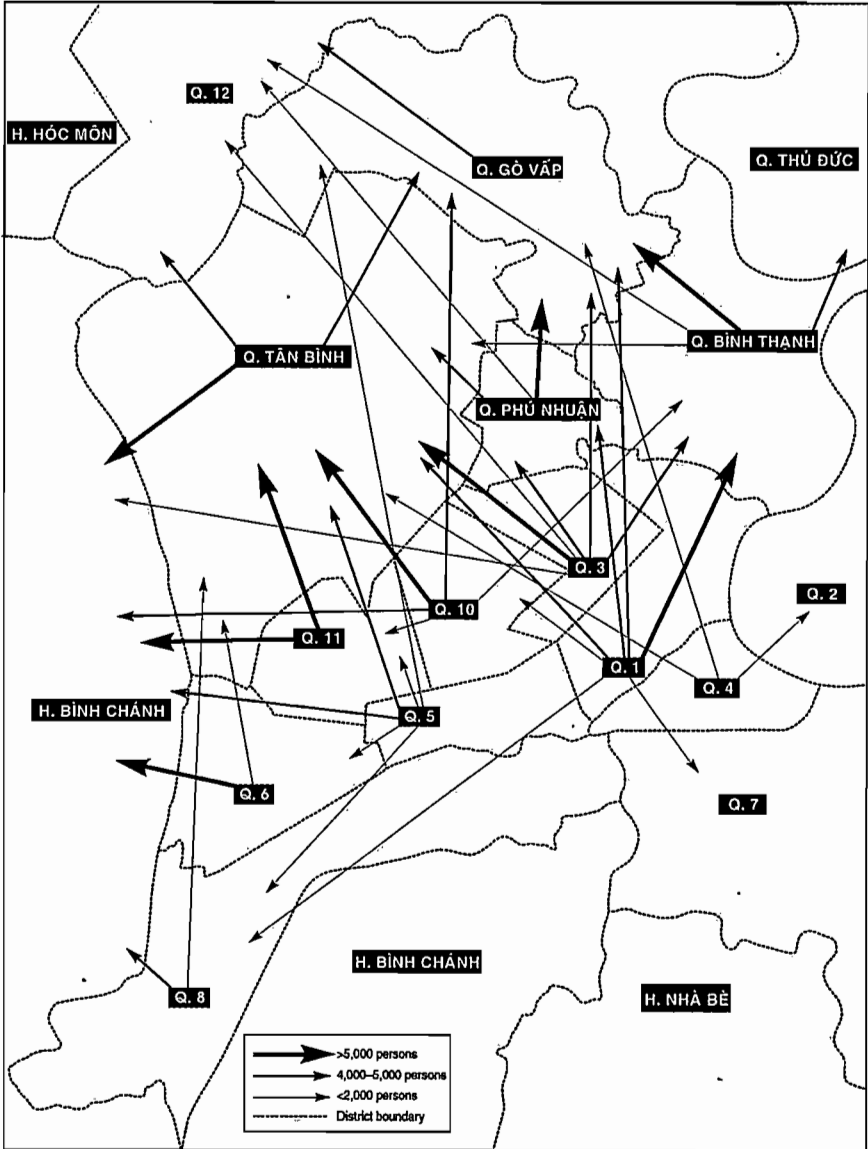
The population census is also a tool for the study of intra-urban migrations within the broad administrative boundaries of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi.

In both of these cities, movements are only significant in the central districts and the immediate surrounding districts. There was very little change in the rural zones between 1994 and 1999 with regard to movement of people aged five or older in Cu Chi, Nha Be and Can Gio Districts (in Ho Chi Minh City) or Soc Son District (in Hanoi). We are therefore going to focus on the movement taking place in the core area (Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

The existence of a positive migration balance from the centre to the suburbs in both cities is confirmed, leading to a “dispersal” of the population. This shift is mainly due to the increase of the cost of land in the downtown core caused by increased marketing; it is reinforced locally by the “dispersal” or “deconcentration” policies of the municipalities aiming to improve sanitary conditions in certain central zones that are very densely populated and unhealthy.

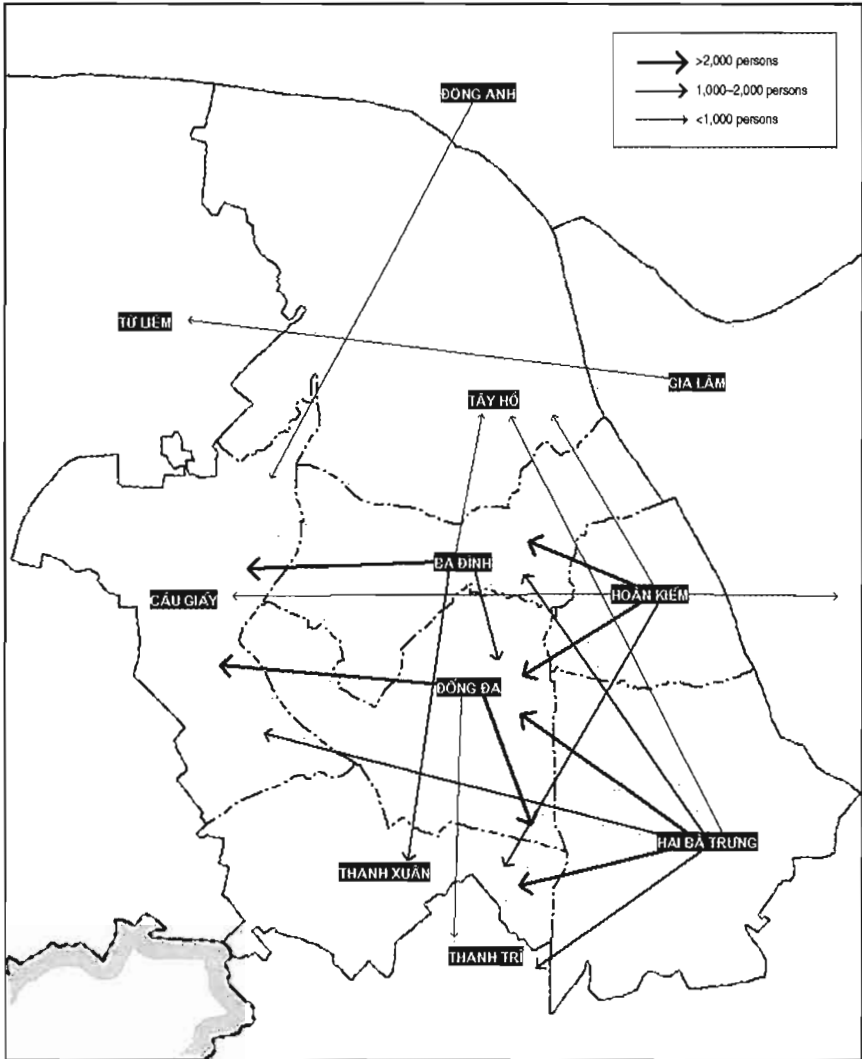
In Ho Chi Minh City, the zones that have been urbanized for the longest time have become the source zones for intra-urban migration. These are mainly Districts 1, 3, 10 (Sai Gon zone), 5, 6, 11 (Cho Lon zone), Binh Thanh and Phu Nhuan (Gia Dinh zone).

FIGURE 3.1
Ho Chi Minh City: Main Intra-urban Migratory Movements
between Districts from 1994 to 1999
(Population Aged Five or Older in 1999;
Net Movements Greater than 1,000 Persons)



Source: 1999 Census of Vietnam

FIGURE 3.2
Hanoi: Main Intra-urban Migratory Movements between Districts from 1994 to 1999
(Population Aged Five or Older in 1999; Net Movements Greater than 500 Persons)



Source: 1999 Census of Vietnam

The districts to which these people are moving are located in the very close periphery of these central districts, be they “urban” such as Tan Binh (agricultural and military land that has recently been subdivided or collective housing) or “semi-urban” such as District 12 (individual houses), or “rural”, such as Binh Chanh (new industrial zones and collective sub-divisions that are being urbanized very quickly). The attractiveness of “new” zones observed is due to many job opportunities being available in industry, such as Thu Duc District and District 7 or District 2, with its residential vocation including the Thu Thiem project, for example. However, the impact of the “Saigon South” project development in District 7 and Nha Be and Binh Chanh Districts had not yet become visible at the time of the survey.

District 8 and Binh Thanh District are zones of both immigration and emigration. The reason for this would require a study at the ward (*phuong*) level, for people are moving out of some of them and moving into others. These districts are also transit zones toward districts further removed from the centre, such as Go Vap (for Binh Thanh) and Binh Chanh (for District 8) as the price of land continues to skyrocket.

Interestingly, District 4 appears to have been “repulsive” from 1994 to 1999, with no inward migration due to the major environmental problems encountered between the port zone and the many industrial establishments.

In Hanoi, the phenomenon of population dispersal was also seen in the oldest central districts (Hoan Kiem and Ba Dinh), in which land prices have become prohibitive. The evolution is differentiated in the other central districts. Hai Ba Trung District is experiencing a certain loss of interest in favour of Dong Da District, which is reputed to be more up-scale and closer to the centre, while prices have not gone as sky-high as in the older quarters. This would indicate that people have been “selected” due to an increased income differentiation. Dong Da is seen to be a transit zone, receiving migrants from the central districts and Hai Ba Trung while sending people who are less affluent to the suburban districts of Cau Giay and Thanh Tri.

Generally speaking, districts located close to the centre are in-migration zones: Thanh Tri, Thanh Xuan, Cau Giay and Tay Ho. Among them are found the three new “urban” districts.⁵

A look at a number of key geographical indicators for the greater urban communities of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi reveals very strong convergences, which may appear surprising at first glance for two cities that are differentiated by many socioeconomic and geographical features, not to mention the history of each one that was radically “separate” for a long time. But they also show some remarkable specificities.

The main common feature seen here in both centres is the recent “dispersal” of the population from the downtown areas out to the close suburbs.

To a considerable extent, intra-urban mobilities are seen to be a new phenomena in as much as they are most certainly linked to the recent economic liberalization and the social differentiation gradually resulting therefrom.

Both of these phenomena are consistent with an urban recomposition process, the consequences of which in terms of infrastructure and urban transit, for instance, particularly in the peri-urban zone, have yet to be grasped in their entirety.

Characteristics of the Population and Households Surveyed

Social changes invariably influence the nature, characteristics and functions of the family. Since 1975, Vietnamese society has undergone profound changes. Vietnam moved from being a society in a time of war with a planned, centralized economy to a market economy (in rural areas, the family returned to being a unit of production and consumption). The obsolete agricultural economy is being restructured in the direction of mechanization and modernization, accompanied by a net improvement in the living standards, as well as by a rural exodus subsequent to a reallocation of land and consolidation of farms. Changes in activity and income are affecting relationships among household members. The country has left its isolation to rapidly integrate regional and international social and economic affairs. This evolution is causing conflicts among the generations regarding values such as the way of looking at life, how to conduct business, love, marriage, family, and so on. During the last quarter of the twentieth century, especially since the “Renovation” policy began taking effect in 1986, in an indirect way this evolution has radically transformed Vietnamese society. It can therefore be assumed that the Vietnamese family in general and the family in the major urban areas of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi in particular, have undergone a profound change: drastic drop in fertility, greater empowerment of women and the beginning of nuclear families with younger generations going off to live on their own.

Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Population

An analysis of the population structure by sex in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi highlights the following points: in Ho Chi Minh City, females

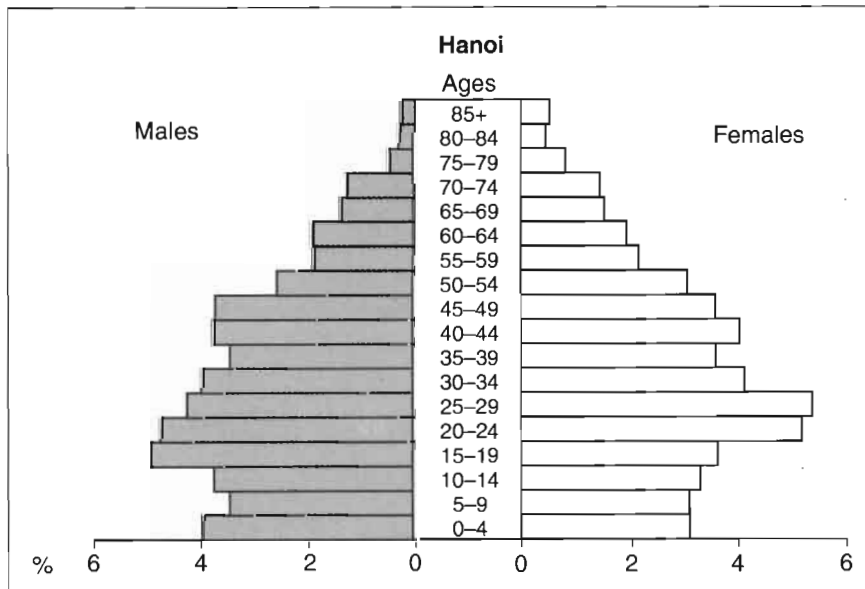
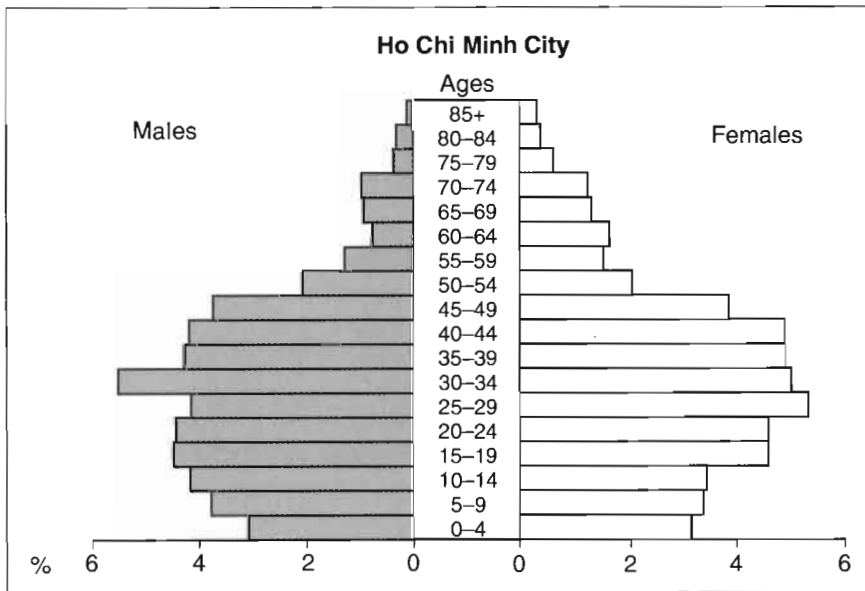
outnumber males (51 per cent), while in Hanoi the two sexes are basically equal in number. Concomitantly, there is a preponderance of females noted among migrants, which is one of the distinctive features of some Southeast Asian cities.

The age structure of the population in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi shows similarities: a relatively low proportion of children due to the recent widespread acceptance of family planning, a swelling of the pyramids at working ages owing to rural-urban migration and a relatively high proportion of elderly persons. In both cities, the population is not very young and it can be said that it has started to age (Figure 3.3).⁶ In the 0–14 age group, the sex ratio (number of boys for 100 girls) is very high, that is, 111 in Ho Chi Minh City and 119 in Hanoi. This is possibly an indirect consequence of having fewer children, with a selective interruption of pregnancy by couples systematically wanting a boy, as has been noted in many Asian countries (China, India, South Korea, Taiwan, etc.). An in-depth study of the reasons for selective abortions would be necessary to substantiate any affirmation.

The proportion of inhabitants whose place of birth and current place of residence are the same is higher in Hanoi than in Ho Chi Minh City. Only 67.8 per cent of the people in Ho Chi Minh City were born there, whereas the proportion of people in Hanoi that were born in Hanoi is 76.3 per cent. The proportion of married persons is higher in Hanoi than in Ho Chi Minh City, 71.3 per cent compared to 63.1 per cent. Migrants to Hanoi originate from the northern provinces, mostly from the Red River Delta (14.9 per cent). On the other hand, migrants to Ho Chi Minh City originate from all regions of the country, with those from the Mekong Delta making up the majority (9.8 per cent). Next are migrants from the Red River Delta (6.2 per cent), then from the southeastern provinces (4.2 per cent) (Figure 3.4). The appeal of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi is due to their better socioeconomic and geographical conditions, for instance, the large seaport in Ho Chi Minh City, the level of investment and size of their labour market.

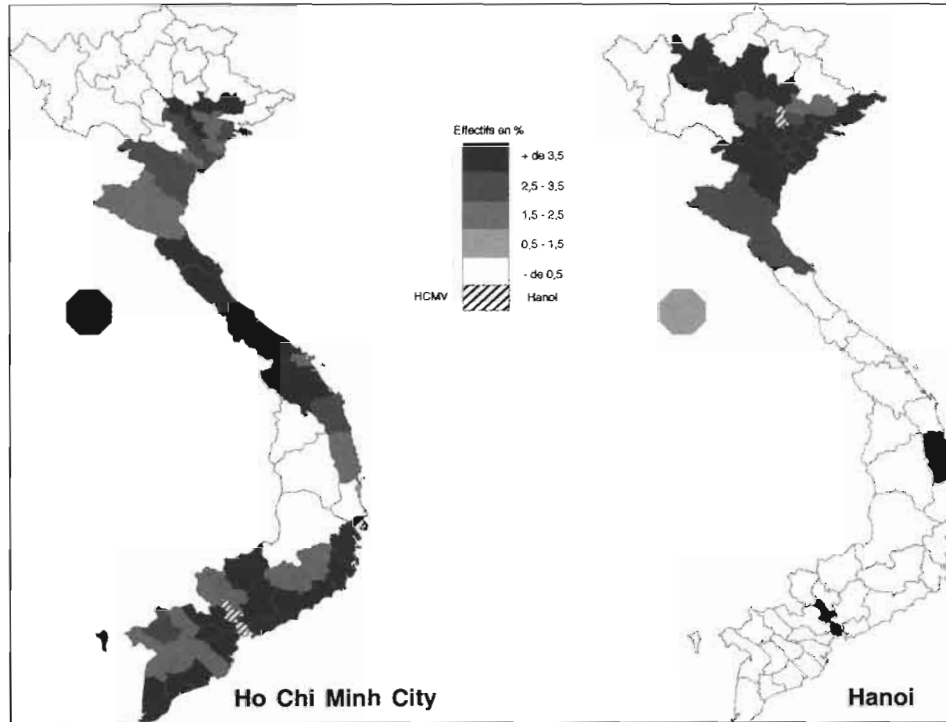
The law in Vietnam requires that each person be registered as a permanent resident. However, not having this status is no longer an impediment to migration. A person without permanent residential status runs into some minor complications in daily life or is penalized with regard to land or vehicle ownership. The proportion of persons registered at their place of residence is lower in Ho Chi Minh City than in Hanoi (80.7 per cent and 89.9 per cent respectively), which may be due to the fact that this civil

FIGURE 3.3
Age Pyramids in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi



Source: PRUD Project, IER, PC, IRD, 2003

FIGURE 3.4
Distribution of Population Born outside of Ho Chi Minh City or Hanoi by Province of Birth
 (% – octagons = abroad)



Source: PRUD Project, IER, PC, IRD, 2003 (Map by Yves Blanca, IRD)

formality existed in Hanoi long before it was enforced in Ho Chi Minh City, as well as to the preponderance of the informal sector in the latter city. Nevertheless, there are some characteristics common to both cities: the fast-paced rate of urbanization, the appeal they have for the migrant population and the concern to stem the migration rate.

The average number of years of education is lower in Ho Chi Minh City than in Hanoi (7.1 and 8.5 respectively). The difference in level of education between the two cities is only a matter of concern for individuals aged fifteen or over. The proportion of persons who have gone through higher education is 8.8 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City compared to 19.5 per cent in Hanoi. The average number of years of education drops progressively as one moves out into the suburbs. Generally, the level of education is higher for men than for women and the difference grows wider with age, which highlights the recent progress made in the south in the field of education and the brain drain to the political capital.

The proportion of persons who have no occupational training is 80.0 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City compared to 60.3 per cent in Hanoi. Although the majority of migrants go to Ho Chi Minh City in search of work, the reason most frequently given by migrants to Hanoi is their desire to further their education.

There is virtually no gap between Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi with regard to the proportion of persons aged thirteen years or over that are working (56.1 per cent and 55.8 per cent respectively). But the proportion of homemakers is much higher in Ho Chi Minh City than in Hanoi (13.3 per cent compared to 3.9 per cent), where a higher number of women have entered the labour force.

In Ho Chi Minh City, industry and handicraft (27.6 per cent), services (20.8 per cent) and business (19.0 per cent) are the sectors that are drawing the most workers. In Hanoi, however, agriculture remains the sector that absorbs most of the labour (24.8 per cent), even though Soc Son District, almost entirely agricultural, was not included in the survey. The public sector (23.5 per cent) comes in second place.

Nearly half of the population 13 years of age or older in Ho Chi Minh City works in family businesses (43.8 per cent), private companies or corporations (27.7 per cent). In Hanoi, on the other hand, the public sector and corporate sector are the two economic sectors that are absorbing most of the workers (58.5 per cent combined). In both cities, workers are mostly salaried employees on fixed-term or open-ended contracts, 58.7 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 61.8 per cent in Hanoi.

Household Characteristics: Size and Living Standards

Borne along by social transformations, households are gradually becoming better adjusted to the new social context without completely leaving behind traditional Vietnamese family values. It used to be common for a household to have many children, whereas currently in both cities, the average household size is tending to grow smaller. In Ho Chi Minh City, households with three children or more account for about 28 per cent compared to only 15.1 per cent in Hanoi.

The average number of persons per household is higher in Ho Chi Minh City (4.3 persons) than in Hanoi (4.0 persons). Most heads of households are men, but due to recent historical conditions the proportion of households headed by women remains very high compared to that of other countries. At the same time, the number of nuclear households is high: 55 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 62.3 per cent in Hanoi.

In a one-off survey as was this one, specific data on income could not be collected using direct questions. We therefore opted to make an assessment of the living standards by gathering data on the qualitative characteristics of the dwelling and household equipment. Using this as a basis for critical evaluation, we classified the households interviewed into three groups based on their standard of living: low, average and high. The standard of living is seen to be higher in Ho Chi Minh City than in Hanoi: the proportion of households with a high standard of living in that city is 14.7 per cent compared to only 11.4 per cent in Hanoi. On the other hand, households with a low standard of living in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi are rated at 37.3 per cent and 39.6 per cent respectively. In both cities, the further out one goes into the suburbs, the greater is the proportion of households that have a low standard of living. There is a noteworthy difference between the two cities: in Ho Chi Minh City, the proportion of households with a low standard of living is much greater among households of persons who migrated in the last five years than among non-migrants. In Hanoi, the opposite situation exists because migrant households have a better standard of living. In both cities, the proportion of households enjoying a good standard of living is higher for migrants than for non-migrants.

While wanting to avoid stereotyping, several characteristics often reported regarding the way of living and thinking of the inhabitants of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi are nevertheless found between the lines, notably the industrious aspect of the economic capital and the intellectual role of the political capital. Other differences surface when the migrations are studied.

Residential Migrations: What Prompts Them, How They are Carried out and Their Consequences

Nuances between the Two Cities Regarding the Motives and Manner of Migration

A difference is observed between Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi with regard to the motives for migration. In Ho Chi Minh City, starting up a new household is the reason most frequently given for migrating. In Hanoi, people move in order to have a bigger house (27.4 per cent); these households have increased their living area considerably. The most remarkable increase is noted for households that, prior to migration, lived in the central districts. In both cities, the desire to live close to one's place of work is the second-most frequent reason for moving, 13.2 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City compared to 14.5 per cent in Hanoi. The advantages are many, including a saving of time and money and less fatigue. In Ho Chi Minh City, the third-most frequent reason for migrating is the desire to own one's own home. In this city, many households wish to become homeowners and consider land and a home as very valuable assets.

In Ho Chi Minh City as in Hanoi, intra-urban migration takes place essentially between the central districts. This is explained by the advantage that these districts offer as far as social, economic and cultural infrastructures are concerned in relation to suburban and rural districts. Intra-urban migration is also taking place from the central districts to suburban districts, 8.1 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City compared to 11.0 per cent in Hanoi. Migration between suburban districts is higher in Hanoi where 12.2 per cent of households have made this choice. In Ho Chi Minh City, 10.0 per cent of migrant households have chosen a rural district as a place to move to compared to 2.2 per cent in Hanoi.

Improved Living Conditions for Migrants after Migration

Many questions were asked regarding the nature and quality of the housing, as well as regarding comfort considerations. In both instances some changes were experienced subsequent to intra-urban migration.

Housing

The great majority of housing is in the form of townhouses or rows of attached dwellings, often referred to as "shop houses" (84.7 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 52.0 per cent in Hanoi). In Hanoi, the proportion of independent houses is higher than in Ho Chi Minh City. The difference in

the level of housing between non-migrant and migrant households is only sensed in Hanoi, but as a general rule more migrants live in apartment buildings than non-migrants. In Hanoi, 22.9 per cent of migrant households live in apartment buildings, which is 2.8 times higher than in Ho Chi Minh City. In Hanoi, compared to the situation prior to migration, it is observed that migrant households have frequently left an apartment, such as in a KTT (*Khu Tap The*, public housing unit), for a townhouse. Such things as expropriation, property inheritance and the desire to own a home explain this change.

Most houses in both cities are located in lanes that are less than 4 metres wide (house on a narrow lane). In Hanoi, the proportion of houses on narrow lanes is higher than in Ho Chi Minh City. There is no difference with regard to the location of the dwelling between migrant households and non-migrant households in Ho Chi Minh City. In Hanoi, the proportion of migrant households with a house on the street and those of migrant households owning a house on a narrow lane is dropping, whereas that of households with a house on a wide lane is increasing. The desire to enjoy more comfort or to live in a dwelling that is more in harmony with what one's aspirations, are also reasons for migration.

The proportion of dwellings owned outright is 92.0 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 88.6 per cent in Hanoi. It is lower for migrant households, although the percentage of ownership increases significantly when they move. In Ho Chi Minh City, the proportion of migrant households that rent a house from a private person is higher than in Hanoi. In Hanoi, the living space has clearly increased after migration, from an average of 56.5 square metres per household to 89.4 square metres. On the other hand, there is no big difference in living space before and after migration in Ho Chi Minh City. The increased living space is linked to the increase in the number of rooms. For migrant households, the proportion of one- or two-room homes is dropping, while that of homes with three or more rooms is increasing.

Regarding housing quality, there is a big difference in the materials used in the two cities. In Ho Chi Minh City, most roofs are made of sheet metal, walls with brick or more basic materials such as bamboo or wood. In Hanoi, roofs are most often of concrete construction (usually in the form of a roof terrace), with the walls of brick.

Dwellings have an independent kitchen in 71.0 per cent of cases in Ho Chi Minh City compared to only 43.9 per cent of cases in Hanoi. Furthermore, in Hanoi 30 per cent of households have a kitchen separate from the living

area. There is a preponderance of combined toilet-washroom facilities inside the dwelling. In Ho Chi Minh City, the proportion of separate toilets in the dwelling is greater than in Hanoi. As far as kitchen and toilet facilities are concerned, migrant households report a higher level of comfort compared to their previous situation.

Streets and Public Utility Hook-ups

Street quality is not as good in Ho Chi Minh City as in Hanoi. In the latter, streets are better in the new places of residence. In Ho Chi Minh City, migration is not necessarily synonymous with better infrastructure. At the present time, infrastructure is still poor in rural districts. Yet, given the fast pace of urbanization, migrant households anticipate that the streets will be improved in the near future.

As many as 18.5 per cent of households in Ho Chi Minh City compared to 13.5 per cent in Hanoi live in zones subject to flooding due to rainwater or river overflow. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish the respective role of rainwater or river overflow: in Ho Chi Minh City, rainwater causes major flooding at the time of high tide, which reverses the flow of the river. Migrant households have often chosen a site less subject to flooding due to rainfall. With regard to flooding caused by river overflow, the proportion of households affected does not go down, but rather increases slightly after migration. In addition to the weakness and deficiency of the water drainage system, the topography of both cities is rather flat, which is not conducive to good drainage.

Virtually all households in both cities are connected to the national electricity grid, be it formally or informally, but scarcely half of them have a water tap inside their dwelling. The situation of migrant households differs between the two cities. In Ho Chi Minh City, the use of piped-in water in migrant households is less than that of well-water due to the ongoing deficiency of the water supply facility in suburban and rural districts. In Hanoi, the proportion of migrant households having a water meter is higher than that of non-migrant households and overall, a greater number of households use piped-in water after relocating. This is to be seen in the light of the fact that a lower proportion of households settle in suburban areas.

There is home refuse collection in 87.0 per cent of cases in Ho Chi Minh City compared to only 56.6 per cent of cases in Hanoi, where a high proportion of households have to take their refuse out to a disposal point. The proportion of migrant households making use of collection networks increases after relocation, particularly in Hanoi.

Household Appliances and Power

The acquisition rate of household appliances (iron, telephone, fan, etc.) is similar in both cities. As for means of transportation, motorcycles and bicycles are strongly predominant in both cities (Figure 3.5, following page): in Ho Chi Minh City, more people own motorcycles than bicycles (58.8 per cent compared to 38.8 per cent); in Hanoi, the figures are almost identical for both methods of transport (48.7 per cent compared to 49.5 per cent). The proportion of households owning a motorcycle or a car increases after migration.

Migrants have a rather Positive Opinion Regarding Intra-urban Migration

The very great majority of households surveyed feel that their overall situation improved after migrating in the city. But these feelings need to be qualified.

Education and Training

In both cities, most migrant households feel that they enjoy more advantages as far as education is concerned since their migration, to the extent that the distance between home and school has been lessened, and the quality of instruction in the new place of residence is better. Moreover, having a quieter, roomier place to study is another advantage for migrant households in Hanoi. Among households that state that migration did not bring about any change in the study conditions of their members, most are currently living in the central districts of the two cities.

On the other hand, with regard to healthcare, leisure, quality of the streets and traffic conditions, there is a contrasting situation between the two cities.

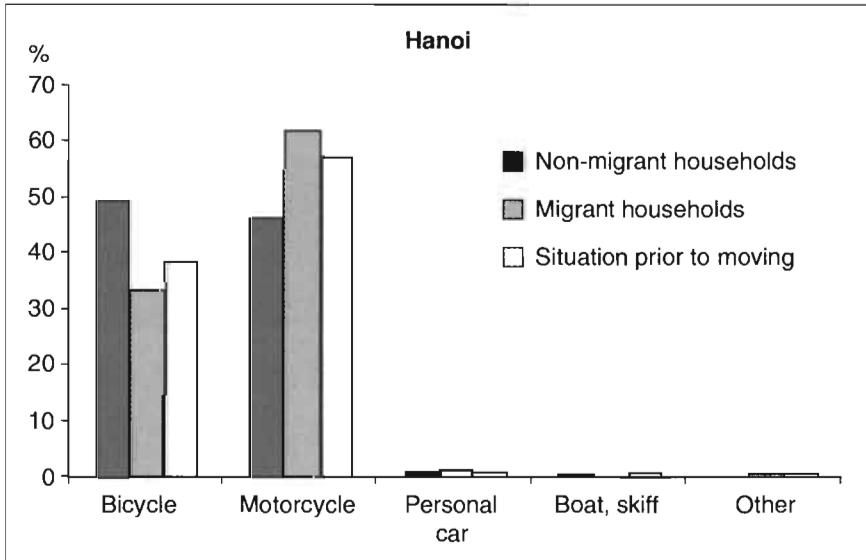
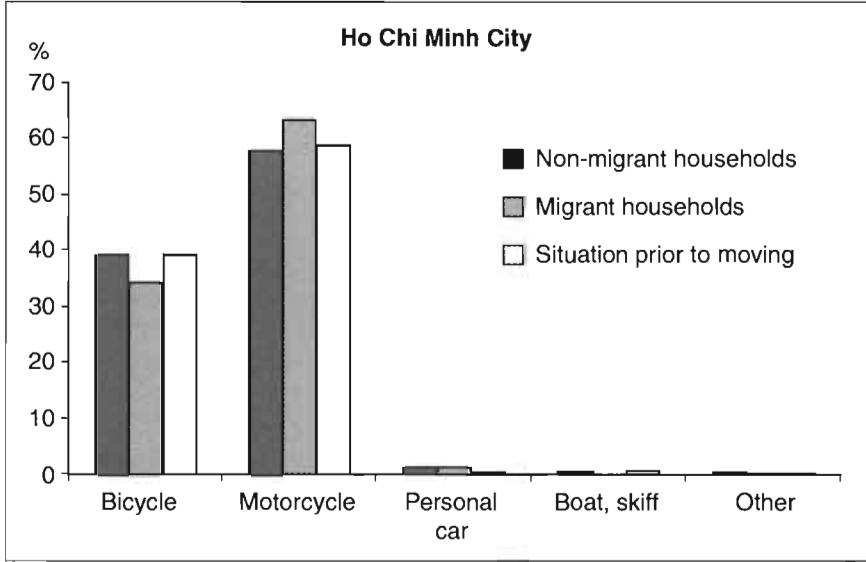
Health

Migrants in Ho Chi Minh City point out that they encounter more problems in the area of healthcare, as some of them want to continue getting treatment from the same establishment as before, which means that they have to travel longer distances. In Hanoi, the situation in this regard has improved after migration.

Leisure Activities and Entertainment

Migrants in Hanoi have easier access to parks, cultural and arts centres and libraries than those in Ho Chi Minh City. Places of leisure such as cultural

FIGURE 3.5
Means of Transportation Available in Households
in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi (%)



Source: PRUD Project, IER, PC, IRD, 2003

centres and parks are often located in the central districts. Households living in the suburban and rural districts therefore find it more challenging to take advantage of these services.

Street Infrastructure and Traffic

In the area of infrastructure and traffic, migrant households in Ho Chi Minh City report that conditions are worse, while those in Hanoi report an improvement. This reflects the situation in the preferred target districts.

Changes in Employment and Place of Work

In Ho Chi Minh City, the proportion of persons who changed their place of work after migration is higher than in Hanoi. Persons who changed their place of work have a lower level of education and vocational skills than those who did not change. Fewer people working in the tertiary sector changed place of work compared to other sectors. In the informal sector, people working for sole proprietorship or family-owned private companies changed their place of work more frequently.

A change in place of work proved to be advantageous for workers in many ways. In addition to higher pay (an advantage that was mentioned frequently), they enjoy other benefits such as a shorter distance between their place of work and place of residence and now their work is more interesting.

Short-term Comings and Goings

An analysis of daily travel patterns is a priority matter for the different activity sectors as well as governmental authorities at all echelons, all the more so because traffic congestion, pollution and sound nuisance are worsening in Vietnam's major cities. At the same time, an increase in distances has an undeniably negative impact on living conditions.

Reasons for Leaving One's Home

During the survey, a preliminary question was asked to isolate the types of travelling done throughout the week: "For what reason did you leave your home yesterday?"

The reasons for leaving one's home were put into nine categories, with a tenth category for persons who did not leave their home (Table 3.1).

TABLE 3.1
Reasons for Leaving One's Home during the Day Preceding visit of the Interviewer by Sex and City (%)

Reasons for leaving one's home	Ho Chi Minh City			Hanoi			Hanoi		
				Raw data			Weighted data*		
	Aggregate	M	F	Aggregate	M	F	Aggregate	M	F
0. Did not go out	16.4	16.0	16.9	17.4	19.3	15.5	18.7	20.6	16.8
1. Work	46.1	57.1	36.1	44.3	47.9	40.9	43.7	47.2	40.2
2. School/training	13.0	13.5	12.6	14.4	16.3	12.5	14.1	16.1	12.1
3. Take children to school	6.5	5.6	7.3	3.1	2.6	3.7	4.4	3.9	5.0
4. Shopping	21.8	4.9	37.1	21.7	4.6	38.3	22.0	4.7	38.8
5. Visit relatives	3.5	3.7	3.3	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.6
6. Visit friends	4.9	6.6	3.4	6.2	7.9	4.5	6.4	8.1	4.7
7. Trip to the clinic/hospital	0.9	0.5	1.2	0.5	0.4	0.6	1.9	1.8	1.9
8. Entertainment	5.1	6.3	4.0	5.2	6.9	3.5	6.5	8.2	4.8
9. Miscellaneous	0.8	1.1	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	1.9	2.0	1.7

Classification of reasons for going away from one's home:

0. Did not go out
1. Work (other comments made: business, wholesaling, looking for work partners, looking for work, military training, "I went to work to ask for permission to take time off")
2. School/training (other comment: looking for a place to take training) [this heading included the regular school attended by children and teenagers, refresher education or private tutoring, as well as continuing education in the evening]
3. Take children to/from school/training
4. Shopping
5. Visit relatives [in the city or in the country]
6. Visit friends
7. Trip to the clinic/hospital (other comment: trip to the drugstore/getting medication)
8. Entertainment (comments: bar, "go out for a drink", "go out for breakfast", casual drive, stroll, go out with friends, sports activities, exercises, football, roller skating, tennis, chess, social activities, cultural centre, tourism)
9. Miscellaneous (comments: pagoda, church, funeral, veterans' meeting, ward meeting, "I had to go out to deliver food").

12,009 persons aged 13 or over; several possible responses.

** Interview schedule identical to that of HCMC*

Source: PRUD Project, IER, PC, IRD, 2003

With the exception of Sunday, over 80 per cent of those surveyed left their homes daily in both cities. The structure of the reasons for leaving is similar in both cities, with a few small differences. The main reason for leaving is to go to work. Interestingly, people go to work practically every day of the week, with only a small decrease on the weekend. Additional reasons included shopping trips, travel to school or to a training course, which includes students and persons enrolled in evening classes. Other reasons for going out such as to visit friends or neighbours, relax, etc., are cited less often. Taking children to school seems to be more common in Ho Chi Minh City, no doubt because the distances in that city are greater, but also because the parents have more means of transportation available. On the other hand, it is observed that a larger proportion of children walk to school in Hanoi. Leisure activities were more common in Ho Chi Minh City, due to the fact that the standard of living is higher, because a person has to have the wherewithal to engage in such activities.

The most interesting findings with regard to reasons for going out highlight the following:

- The fact that the reason for leaving one's home is to go to work every day of the week, including the weekend, shows that there is no let-up in economic activity. This is more so in Ho Chi Minh City than in Hanoi.
- Reasons for going out vary according to sex. Men more frequently say they go out to go to work, while women are more frequently saddled with the traditional chores, like shopping and taking the children to school. Men, moreover, enjoy a considerably higher range of recreational activities such as visiting friends and entertainment.
- Each of the two cities has its own specificities: more women in Hanoi have entered the labour force than in Ho Chi Minh City.

Time, Distance and Distribution of Trips during the Day

Travel times to go to work average 20.3 minutes (min) in Ho Chi Minh City compared to 16.3 minutes in Hanoi (Table 3.2). These travel times are overall quite reasonable considering the sprawl of these cities and traffic problems. Logically, the bigger the city, the longer the travel times will be. The same is true of distances as assessed by the people interviewed.

It is noteworthy that the longest distances are reported for suburban districts, wherein employment opportunities are yet few in relation to the population increase, which means people have to look for work in the downtown area or keep the jobs they had there prior to moving out to

TABLE 3.2
Average Shortest Distance and Average Time Spent Going to Work
by Residential Zone and City

Residential zone	Ho Chi Minh City		Hanoi	
	Distance (km)	Time (min)	Distance (km)	Time (min)
Central districts	4.91	20.0	4.24	16.2
Suburban districts	5.10	20.3	5.08	19.1
Rural districts	4.50	20.2	3.29	15.4
Aggregate	4.88	20.6	3.97	16.3

Source: PRUD Project, IER, PC, IRD, 2003

the suburbs. Distances are shortest in the rural districts, where a farming population still prevails and where fields are located close to the homes of the people.

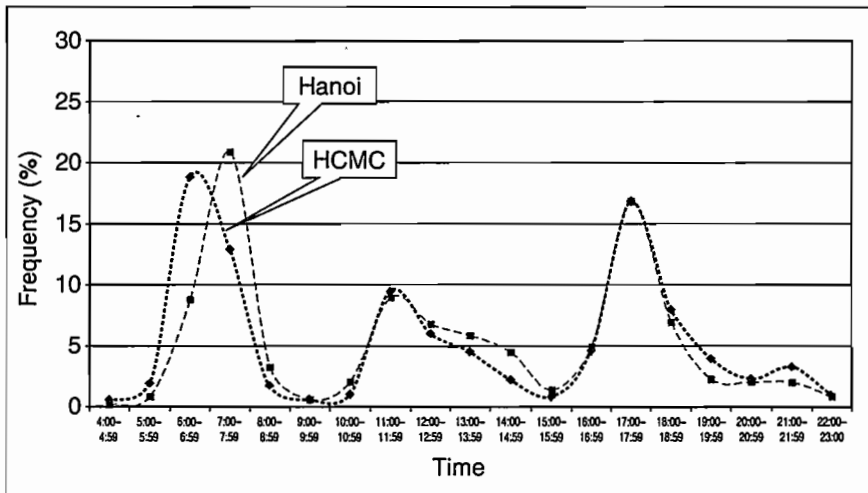
The average time spent going to school is 14.7 minutes in Ho Chi Minh City compared to 15.2 minutes in Hanoi. These times are logically less than that of travelling to work because the density of schools is higher than that of businesses or government offices. Travel time increases consistently from the downtown area to the suburbs because of the decrease in density of school facilities. Obviously, this analysis could be made as a function of the type of school the pupil or student is attending.

Distances travelled to attend supplementary courses are seen to be shorter. Logically, a person will select such a course near one's home or place of work. There is often no choice regarding the location of one's place of work and citizens must comply with the school-zone map. Neither of these constraints applies to personal development courses. In both cities, this type of course is more often chosen not far from one's place of work because it is convenient to attend after work at the end of the day. Rural districts are penalized because of the poorer offer in this area.

The analysis furthermore shows that women generally work closer to their homes than men. However, the differences by sex in distances travelled to attend a training session, whether it is a school or personal development course, are not clear.

Figure 3.6 combines the times for the three types of travel that were analysed — going to work, attending school or taking supplementary training. The trips include going both to and from the concerned activity.

FIGURE 3.6
Aggregate Times for Travel to Work, School or
Supplementary Courses by City (%)



Source: PRUD Project, IER, PC, IRD, 2003

In this way, we obtain a good picture of the rush hours when traffic congestion is likely to be encountered. Three peak traffic times are noted: morning, mid-day and late afternoon. Experience shows that few traffic jams occur in either city at mid-day, which indicates that many people have lunch near their place of work. A ceiling of 10 per cent of people on the streets out of those who travel during the day can be viewed as the minimum limit for the risk of traffic congestion. Under these conditions, it is observed that there is a major risk of traffic jams at the following times: from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 6:20 p.m. in Ho Chi Minh City; from 6:45 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. and likewise 5:00 p.m. to 6:20 p.m. in Hanoi. People start travelling earlier in Ho Chi Minh City and traffic continues later. It is observed that there is heavier traffic in the afternoon in Hanoi. The earlier rush hour in the southern metropolis is largely due to the fact that later “winter hours” were in place in Hanoi at the time of the survey. In the late afternoon, peak traffic occurs in both cities at 5 p.m., which is the official closing time of government offices.

Means of Transportation Used

Modes of travel are dominated by personal transportation, mostly motorcycle (75.1 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City, 57.9 per cent in Hanoi). A greater number of people walk or bicycle in Hanoi. The passenger bus has recently come on the scene, with only a 1.0 per cent use in Ho Chi Minh City and 2.3 per cent in Hanoi.

Shopping

Six types of shopping venues were identified: proximity street markets, *ad hoc* sidewalk markets, small neighbourhood markets, larger centrally located markets, small food supermarkets or shops and superstores. The concepts are no doubt not all totally alike between the two cities, because retail superstores did not exist as such in Hanoi in 2003, which at the time had few supermarkets larger than the neighbourhood food store. This question was put to the population aged thirteen or older. The proportion of inhabitants of Ho Chi Minh City that go to proximity street markets is lower than that of people in Hanoi (16.8 per cent compared to 27.0 per cent). Small markets are the daily routine choice in both cities (17.6 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 19.6 per cent in Hanoi). The frequency of daily travel to big markets and small food supermarkets is very low. A proportion of 57.4 per cent of people in Ho Chi Minh City and 74.4 per cent of those in Hanoi has never gone to a superstore (supermarket in the case of Hanoi). Women outnumber men in shopping at the smaller markets and are more likely to go to them. This gap narrows considerably for superstores; men willingly go shopping there with their wives and the two of them bring purchases home together, especially because the items are generally heavier. It is thus seen that the higher the standard of living, the greater the measure of equality between the sexes.

Entertainment: Visiting and Leisure

Visiting neighbours or friends is a common practice of the Vietnamese people in both Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. It is the most popular activity as approximately 90 per cent of the inhabitants practise it.

Going to the cinema is the most popular form of entertainment, followed by theatre. Yet, no less than 88.1 per cent of the inhabitants of Ho Chi Minh City and 74.3 per cent of people in Hanoi say they never go to the cinema.

Concerts remain low on the entertainment list. The rate of frequenting cultural or youth centres, discotheques and nightclubs is low in both cities. This is also the case for figures relating to neighbourhood activities, going

to the pagoda or to church, picnicking and pleasure trips or travel, but these activities have no doubt not always been viewed as leisure.

Frequenting a karaoke parlour is clearly more popular in Ho Chi Minh City than in Hanoi. The same is true for cafes and bars. People in Hanoi prefer going out for a stroll due to the favourable climate that prevails for a greater part of the year, to the urban environment and extension of sidewalks, but also no doubt because it is free. In Hanoi 30.6 per cent of people compared to 18.6 per cent of inhabitants of Ho Chi Minh City practise this activity.

Opinions on Current Travel Conditions

The growth of population and more travel in the urban area are increasingly overburdening the infrastructure and having an alarming effect on traffic and road safety. As for infrastructure, Ho Chi Minh City currently has 0.81 kilometres of streets per square kilometre while the minimum need is between 4 and 6 kilometres per square kilometre.⁷ It is noteworthy that in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, the number of individual trips made for the most part on motorcycle, is very high. Added to that, the public transit system in both Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi only covers 3.7 per cent and 9 per cent respectively of the transportation needs,⁸ which are rates much below those of metropolises of similar size in the world.

The survey sample included 12,010 persons aged thirteen years or over (7,111 in Ho Chi Minh City and 4,899 in Hanoi). Among these, only 5,753 were actually at home and could give their opinions (3,423 in Ho Chi Minh City and 2,330 in Hanoi). Based on their residential zone, they can be divided into three groups: downtown, suburban and rural.

In concrete terms, the survey focused on:

- Difficulties encountered in course of travel and the cost of travel;
- Quality of the road network;
- Traffic policing;
- Public transit system, more specifically quality of service provided by these methods of transport.

Difficulties Encountered in the Course of Travel

Surprisingly, the number of persons stating that they do not encounter any problem in course of travel makes up the highest proportion, 44.7 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 53.9 per cent in Hanoi. The explanation seems to be that they do not have a great need to travel, they rarely leave home or

they use means of locomotion driven by other persons, which means they do not have to deal with the difficulties.

In both cities, the difficulties reported with travelling essentially involve traffic jams and risks of traffic accidents, which account for 34.6 per cent and 20.6 per cent respectively of the opinions expressed in Ho Chi Minh City, and 29.9 per cent and 14.0 per cent in Hanoi. The rapid pace of urbanization, while infrastructure remains inadequate and poorly designed both in Ho Chi Minh City and in Hanoi, explains why traffic jams are the leading cause of concern.

These rather positive findings are due in part to the recent efforts of the two municipalities to modernise and upgrade the quality of infrastructure such as the street network, create new districts, eliminate bottlenecks and distribute traffic streams to promote freer flow.

Generally speaking, people feel that because of congestion and accident risk, travel is more challenging in downtown areas rather than in the other districts. In Ho Chi Minh City, 42.9 per cent of downtown inhabitants complained about traffic jams, compared to only 17.6 per cent and 19.4 per cent of people living in suburban or rural zones. In Hanoi, there is not much of a spread between those living in the downtown core and those in the periphery districts, although it is great between city core dwellers and people in the rural zone (41.6 per cent, 33.7 per cent and 9.5 per cent). People living in rural districts expressed themselves more positively about traffic jams since the population density is the lowest in those districts. But other problems in these districts are viewed as more serious, such as the lack of a bus service.

The cost of travel is not viewed as a real difficulty since only 1.6 per cent of the people surveyed in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi commented on it. The 30.4 per cent of persons in Ho Chi Minh City and 33.2 per cent in Hanoi who stated they did not have any travel expenses would mostly be persons working at home, elderly persons or young people whose parents take them to school. In Ho Chi Minh City, the persons interviewed spend an average of 105,500 dong a month on their travel compared to only 72,000 dong in Hanoi. The majority of people stating that they have to pay for their travel (72.3 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 84 per cent in Hanoi) spend less than 100,000 VND a month.

Opinions on Street Quality

In Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, 36.9 per cent and 36.3 per cent of the population respectively consider the quality of streets as 'good' or 'very

good', 16.2 per cent and 16.7 per cent feel they are in 'bad' or even 'very bad' condition, while 46.9 per cent and 44.5 per cent reckon it to be 'average'. In reality, it is difficult to make an assessment of roads that were very recently upgraded, and it is not known to what precise period the opinions expressed applies.

Those who rate the quality of the street network as 'good' or 'very good' reside mainly in the central districts of Ho Chi Minh City (40.9 per cent), while only 29.9 per cent and 28.4 per cent of those living in suburban districts or rural districts share this opinion. In Hanoi, the gap is less prominent. Generally, the quality of roads is not the same everywhere, with investments in infrastructure favouring the downtown area over the suburban area.

Opinions on Traffic Policing

The responses given on this count are rather positive. Respectively 36.5 per cent and 52.0 per cent of persons surveyed in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi rate traffic policing as 'good' or 'very good'. Only 5.7 per cent and 6.4 per cent respectively consider it to be 'bad' or 'very bad'.

Those interviewed support their positive assessment with the following reasons: continuous presence and adequate number of officers on duty; effective intervention in the event of traffic jams or accidents; very positive view of behaviour and conduct such as helpfulness and frequent reminders of traffic rules.

Negative assessments highlight problems of partiality and corruption (bribes) on the part of officers, inadequate staffing and therefore a low police presence, and lack of effective intervention in the event of traffic jams or infractions. Affairs involving police corruption are rated to be more serious in Hanoi (25.3 per cent) than in Ho Chi Minh City (9.0 per cent).

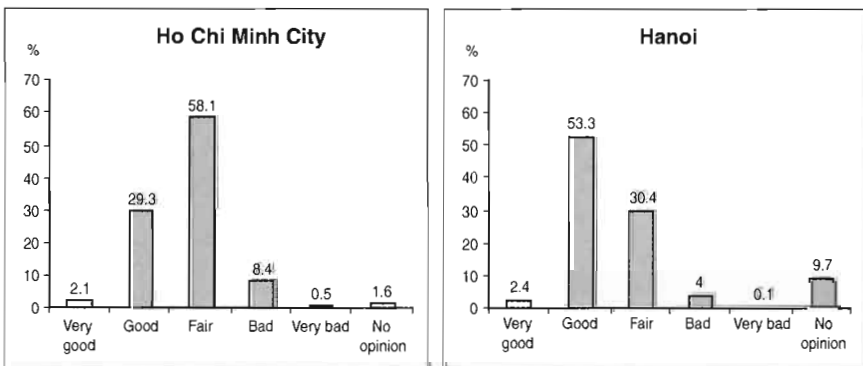
Opinions on the Quality of Public Transit

For over a year, in the major centres and in Ho Chi Minh City and in Hanoi in particular, there is a greater routine presence of buses. When asked to express themselves on the quality of public transportation, the majority of citizens find it to be average (58.1 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 30.4 per cent in Hanoi). However, 31.4 per cent of those interviewed in Ho Chi Minh City and 55.7 per cent in Hanoi rate it as good or very good. Only 8.9 per cent and 4.1 per cent respectively of the inhabitants of the two cities find it 'bad' or 'very bad'. This is a rather positive appraisal, and the service seems to be more appreciated in Hanoi.

The favourable remarks highlight the number of vehicles (sufficient, meets travel needs), their quality (comfortable, clean), quality of the service (keeping schedule times, good service) and reasonable fares. Among these reasons, bus quality and comfort are most frequently mentioned (45.9 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 40.1 per cent in Hanoi), followed by reasonable fares (33.8 per cent and 20.6 per cent), keeping to scheduled times and service quality. These opinions can be explained by the bus improvement strategy undertaken since early 2002 in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. In Ho Chi Minh City, new models that are more powerful and equipped with air conditioning are replacing all of the old buses.⁹

In order to overcome the prejudice of citizens toward buses and improve service quality, the organization of the workload and salaries of drivers and ticket sellers were reformed. The fixed charge system was eliminated so that drivers are no longer obliged to take on the greatest possible number of passengers.¹⁰ In addition to their basic wages, drivers are entitled to bonuses, overtime pay, etc. An allowance for service quality has been put in place. To monitor and assess precisely the performance of drivers and ticket sellers, the Public Transit Company has established a department whose job is to ensure service quality and bus maintenance. The results are used to determine the level of bonuses. That is one of the reasons why users are left with a good impression.

FIGURE 3.7
Opinions on the Quality of Public Transit in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi (%)



Source: PRUD Project, IER, PC, IRD, 2003

Fares are based on a flat rate (2,000 dong in Ho Chi Minh City and 3,000 dong in Hanoi) and are valid on all lines regardless of the distance.¹¹ We are left wondering how relevant the single tariff can be for faraway destinations.

As for the negative comments about public transit, in Ho Chi Minh City the highest proportion of opinions (40.9 per cent), were critical of the poor quality of the buses (too risky) and were expressed mainly by people living in suburban districts (46.5 per cent), Recent accidents due to technical problems and age of the vehicles that resulted in personal injury and property damage, were advanced in support of this. The insufficient number of bus lines comes in second place with 18.9 per cent of votes, mainly expressed in rural areas (19.6 per cent). The reality is that there are not yet enough buses to meet the need, which explains the gaps in service.

Downtown residents criticise the poor service (14.8 per cent), irregularity (10.5 per cent) and overcrowding on the buses (6.4 per cent). Also, 8.2 per cent of users complain that the buses are too big for the width of the thoroughfares. There are currently many vehicles with over fifty seats that are hard to manoeuvre in the downtown areas, and this makes it difficult for them to keep on schedule, especially during the rush hours.

Proposals to Improve the Public Transit System

The majority of persons surveyed (39.3 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 61.1 per cent in Hanoi) propose an increase in the number of buses, as well as opening up new lines and increasing the frequency of runs to cut down on waiting time and avoid overcrowding the vehicles.

Other points raised involved having bus stops close to residential areas as well as diversifying the modes of public transit. Streetcars and subways would round out the bus network and thus contribute to improving public transit in the two cities.

After comments on various quantitative factors, strong support was voiced for infrastructure modernisation (17.9 per cent and 16.1 per cent of people living in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi). Upgrading the quality of the routes would promote the use of buses, currently many of which are considered too cumbersome and harshly criticized whenever traffic congestion occurs.

The quality of service needs particular attention. This was pointed out by 6 per cent of persons interviewed in Ho Chi Minh City and 6.9 per cent of those living in Hanoi. For consistent, quality service, awareness is needed on the part drivers and ticket sales personnel and management must be streamlined.

Respectively 2.7 per cent and 3.8 per cent of people interviewed in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi feel that it is necessary to subsidize public transit. The current fare structure indicates that there is already a high level of subsidization, but there is no other choice in order to win users and get people to adopt new travelling habits. Without aiming at full cost recovery, there would be a need to increase fares substantially in the long run, making them more “realistic”.

A number of citizens (3.2 per cent in HCMC and 2.2 per cent in Hanoi) underscore the important role of communication between transport companies and the public. The advantages of public transit must be highlighted, and awareness must be raised regarding the traffic code and compliance with it, but using attractive communication techniques. The awareness-raising and information campaign must take an encouraging and informative form and resolutely avoid propaganda. The various media need to be associated in this undertaking.

Future Projects for Residential Mobility

A study of the future mobility plans of people living in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi is important for researchers and decision-makers. It will enable them to ascertain the foreseeable evolution of population distribution in both of the two major centres of the country in order to give direction so that appropriate urban planning policies are framed that are in keeping with the way society is evolving.

Given the strong urban growth in both centres, how many people intend to migrate? What reasons are motivating them to migrate? Will those who migrated in the last five years migrate again? What are the differences in the profiles of persons who plan to move compared to those who have no such plan? The analysis of issues relating to the aspirations of the people regarding their future place of residence will enable us to draw some conclusions.

A Limited Number of People Want to Migrate

When asked about their future residence plans, 78.8 per cent of people in Ho Chi Minh City and 80.2 per cent in Hanoi said they had no intention of moving. That is perfectly logical. Moving upsets people’s lives. People do not like change, especially as they get older. It also causes problems for children going to school. So if one’s current dwelling is not too bad, people generally prefer to stay where they have settled.

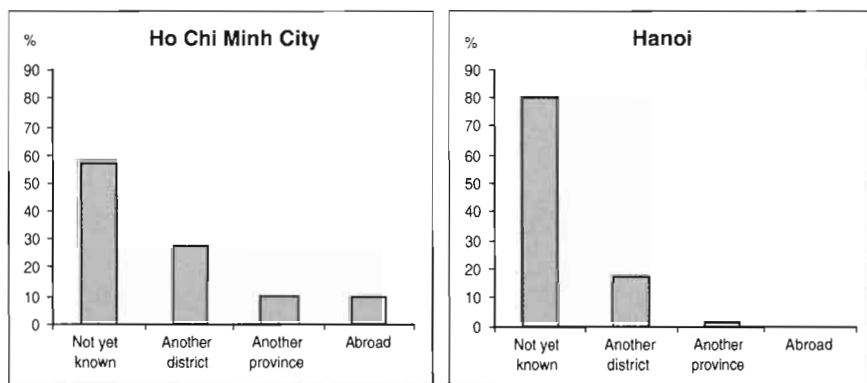
The percentage of people who do intend to move in both cities is very low: 9.6 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 4.6 per cent in Hanoi, which is half as many. Those currently living in the central districts show a greater desire to migrate than those in suburban districts and rural districts. This can be understood in the light of the tremendous density and overcrowding in a number of central districts in both cities, which prompts people to want more spacious accommodation.

Despite the low proportion of those who express the wish to move, it is noted that those who moved during the last five years (“migrants”) are more inclined to think about changing their residence than those who did not migrate (“non-migrants”). This trend is seen in both Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. In Hanoi, the percentage is 7.1 per cent for migrants, but only 4.1 per cent for non-migrants. Undoubtedly some of those who have already experienced a move are not fully satisfied with their current accommodation; and if one has successfully moved once, migrating again is not such a frightening thing.

Most People Who Intend to Move are Undecided as to Where to Move

The proportion of citizens who intend to migrate is not only low in both cities, but those who are thinking about it have not yet necessarily chosen their destination (Figure 3.8).

FIGURE 3.8
Destination Contemplated by Those with the Intention of Migrating in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi



Source: PRUD Project, IER, PC, IRD, 2003

Those who do not yet know where they would move amount to 57.8 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City, but the number is even greater in Hanoi (80.2 per cent). A comparison of those who have already migrated with those who have not yet done so underscores a difference between the two cities. In Ho Chi Minh City the percentage of persons who did not have any idea about their future place of residence is higher for migrants (53.8 per cent for non-migrants compared to 63.8 per cent for migrants). In Hanoi, the inverse is true: 83.3 per cent of non-migrants do not have a clear idea of their future destination compared to only 57.4 per cent for those who have previously moved.

Having the intention to move without yet knowing where can be explained by the fact that the person is not happy with his or her present accommodation, but because of a lack of information or funds, it has not yet been possible to pick a specific location. Suitable accommodation may be too expensive, while accommodation that suits one's available budget is found in districts where the infrastructure needs to be improved.

Central Districts are the Planned Destination for nearly Half of Those Who have Decided where They Want to Move

Among those who have chosen their future destination, many are looking at the central districts. This percentage is 48.6 per cent and 42.7 per cent for Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi respectively.

In Ho Chi Minh City, 52.2 per cent of people currently residing in the central districts, 19 per cent living in suburban districts and 68.5 per cent living in rural districts expressed the intention to settle in a central district. In Hanoi, these figures are respectively 59 per cent, 8.5 per cent and 36.4 per cent. The central districts are a drawing card because of practical considerations: travel is minimized and the environment is more conducive to business. Services such as markets, hospitals and leisure activities are more developed. Schools in such locations are also highly rated. The trend to migrate into the central districts therefore appears to be logical.

In Ho Chi Minh City, the rural districts do not appear among the choices of those who want to migrate. The reason is that the density of some central districts such as Tan Binh and Go Vap is still low and they are therefore the preferred destinations of those who wish to migrate. In Hanoi, besides the central districts, the suburban districts are also attractive destinations for migrants. Nearly a third (29.8 per cent) of citizens who wish to migrate, would like to settle in a rural district. The urbanization policies for the suburban districts of Hanoi — still often classified as rural in 2003 — are

the reason for it. The high urban growth of Hanoi in recent years is drawing people into the suburban districts and rural districts because the cost of land is lower and infrastructure is progressively being upgraded.¹²

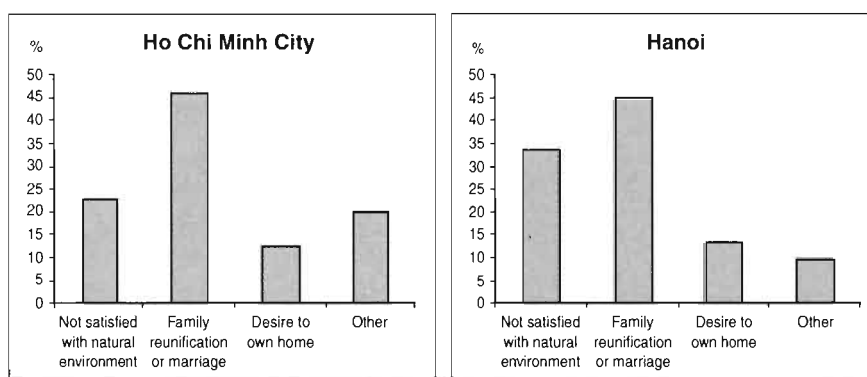
Reasons Why People Wish to Change Their Place of Residence

The very diverse reasons for changing one's residence can be put into the following four categories (Figure 3.9):

- Unsatisfactory natural environment
- Family reunification and marriage
- Desire to own one's own home
- Other.

The highest number is for those who intend to migrate for family reunification or marriage: 45.7 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 44.5 per cent in Hanoi. The proportion of people wanting to migrate is higher for non-migrants than migrants in both cities: 48.1 per cent for non-migrants compared to 38.9 per cent for migrants in Ho Chi Minh City. The respective figures for Hanoi are 39.9 per cent compared to 43.2 per cent. This is probably due to the fact that when the migrants moved on an earlier occasion, it was for reasons of family reunification or marriage.

FIGURE 3.9
Reasons for Moving in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi



Source: PRUD Project, IER, PC, IRD, 2003

Dissatisfaction with the natural environment (pollution) or social conditions (“social evils”, insecurity) is also a major consideration: 22.5 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 33.4 per cent in Hanoi. Environment is a very important factor for people today. People in the work force all want to live in a good environment and where people have a high level of education. Security is also essential. Non-migrants and migrants also show differences with regard to the reasons for which they want to migrate. Environment is the reason given by 20.5 per cent of non-migrants compared to 27.1 per cent of migrants in Ho Chi Minh City. In Hanoi, the corresponding figures are 34.5 per cent and 26.5 per cent.

The desire to own their own home is the third reason people give for migrating, 12 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 13 per cent in Hanoi. Traditionally, after getting married, the young couple lives with the husband’s family for a time. And because of difficulties in the area of housing, many young couples are unable to live on their own. So, many such persons will migrate in the future if and when conditions allow it so as to live away from their parents. There is a difference in the trend between non-migrants and migrants in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. In Ho Chi Minh City, migrants most often give this reason (10.5 per cent for non-migrants compared to 16.2 per cent for migrants). In Hanoi, migrants who want to change their dwelling for this reason are only slightly more numerous.

Other reasons such as a change in one’s place of work, choice of a good school for one’s children, inheritance, means of communication, etc., are advanced by a low proportion of persons.

Profile of Persons Wishing to Change their Place of Residence

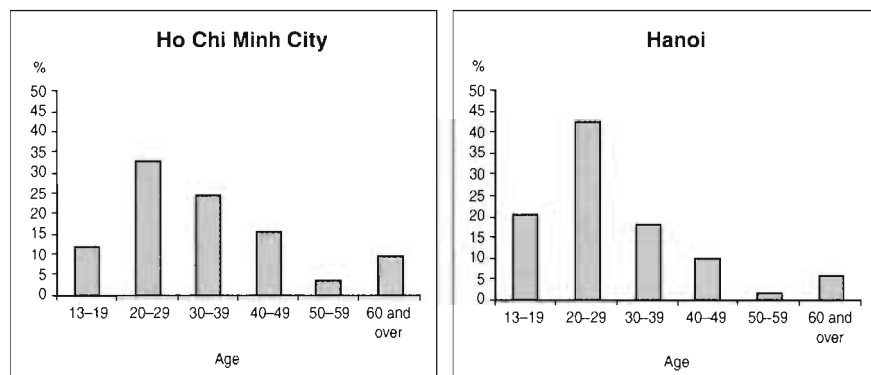
The determination seen in the profile of persons wishing to move enables the government to put deconcentration policies in place. These have to be implemented, while at the same time developing infrastructure to meet the needs of the people.

Young People are more Desirous of Moving than Older Persons

In Ho Chi Minh City and in Hanoi, the group between twenty and twenty-nine years of age is the most desirous of a change of residence (Figure 3.10).

A rather large segment of the group aged twenty to twenty-nine expressed the desire to move (33.2 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 42.6 per cent in Hanoi). These are single persons or newly married persons, who are fully

FIGURE 3.10
Distribution of Persons Intending to Migrate in
Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi by Age



Source: PRUD Project, IER, PC, IRD, 2003

in tune with their family evolution and career path. They are in the greatest need of a new dwelling because they would like to live on their own, and they would like a new dwelling that is more comfortable because they are better off financially. Those under twenty years of age tend to follow their parents. For persons older than fifty, the number of those wanting to migrate is small (3.9 per cent in Ho Chi Minh City and 2.1 per cent in Hanoi). But this proportion grows after the age of sixty, notably in Ho Chi Minh City. This is explained by the fact that after reaching that age, problems arise involving the dependency of elderly parents on their children due to diminished financial means and declining health.

Persons desirous of migrating often have a high skills level, have jobs and work in business, services or handicrafts

In Ho Chi Minh City, the desire to migrate on the average is higher for persons who have a high skills level, work in the public sector or have their own company in the business or services sector. Indeed, 14.6 per cent of those having an academic education are desirous of migrating. These are also people who are better off financially and can afford to look for a better place to live. In reality, migration will not have any impact on their work, as they will stick with the same job after moving.

Conclusion

Urban growth in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi these last few years is prompting more people to move. The proportion of intra-urban migrants is also tending to increase. The migration flow from central districts to suburbia is very pronounced in Ho Chi Minh City. A similar trend is observed in Hanoi, although the final destination is more diversified. This trend is explained by the lower cost of land as well as by the gradual improvement of infrastructure in the suburban districts, making them more attractive. Nevertheless, difficulties are encountered due to means of transportation and inadequate infrastructure in these zones.

Migration generally enables those involved to enjoy better residential conditions because of improved housing quality and more amenities. Many households are thus able to own their own homes, and a home is considered to be a valuable asset, both economically and socially. Although improvement of one's living environment as well as increasing one's living space are patent, this evolution is also to be related to a selectivity of migrants in relation to the rest of the population, because migration demands certain means. Migrants are far from being a group of people who are simply escaping the downtown core.

With regard to short-term to-and-from travel, it is noted that the inhabitants of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi leave their homes every day, with a drop on Sunday. Obviously there are many reasons for going out of one's home: work, shopping, school or evening courses, visiting friends and neighbours, leisure activities, etc. However, the work factor remains important even on Sunday, showing that economic activity is unrelenting.

The inhabitants generally express themselves positively with regard to the quality of streets, traffic policing and quality of the transit service. To improve public transit, they suggest that quantitative measures and measures involving the putting in of new stops near residences be accompanied with a diversification of means (such as streetcar and subway).

The desire to move is not very widespread. Furthermore, a high proportion of potential migrants have not yet chosen their destination. Most people intending to migrate in the years to come are eying the central districts as their destination because of the proximity of key infrastructures. This conclusion should draw the attention of urban planning decision-makers to infrastructure development so as to meet the needs of the people and make the suburban and rural districts a destination of choice. This will help reduce the population overload in the central districts and enable incoming migrants to settle there in better conditions.

Notes

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- ¹ The urban population based on the administrative definitions of the census is 4.2 million inhabitants.
- ² Repetitive daily travel.
- ³ Statistical bias caused by the presence in a sample of too large clusters of individuals, similar to one another, within the cluster and thereby throwing off the representativeness of the sample.
- ⁴ Cu Chi and Can Gio Districts in Ho Chi Minh City and Soc Son District in Hanoi, which are still mostly rural, were excluded from the survey. It focused on twenty districts in Ho Chi Minh City and eleven districts in Hanoi. In November 2003, a redistricting measure led to the creation of two new districts in each of the cities. We are using here the administrative distribution that prevailed prior to this date.
- ⁵ Thanh Xuan District is a special case in that it was created as the result of a split of the 'urban' district of Dong Da and the annexing of a number of rural communes (*xa*) in the suburbs.
- ⁶ Some discrepancies in the pyramids are due to the limited size of the sample.
- ⁷ *Báo cáo của sở Giao thông Công chính Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh*. [Report of the Ministry of Transportation and Public Works, Ho Chi Minh City].
- ⁸ *Đề án quy hoạch phát triển giao thông vận tải Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh và Hà Nội đến năm 2020*. [Planning and Development Project for the Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi Transportation Networks to 2020].
- ⁹ *Lao Dong* (Hanoi), 2 December 2003.
- ¹⁰ Previously, drivers had to pay a fixed amount to the company in order to have the right to drive the vehicle. If drivers collected more than that amount, they pocketed the difference. But they had to pay out of pocket if there was a shortfall in receipts. So drivers would try to pack in the largest possible number of passengers.
- ¹¹ Fares in 2005. Ho Chi Minh City is considering a raise, but has not yet enforced it.
- ¹² Two new urban districts were established in November 2003 in each of the two cities.

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Photo: Emmanuel Cerise, 2002

Hanoi: an urban boulevard, Cau Giay boulevard (Paper Bridge) on the La Thanh trunk road as it crosses Tô Lịch River, Cau Giay District

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Cover photo:

Eastern area of Hoan Kiem District in Hanoi, on the right bank of the Red River. This area was built beyond the dyke (seen here surmounted by the wide Tran Quang Khai Street) and is easily inundated during the flood season. "Compartment" houses mix with collective housing buildings. Both of Hanoi's central bridges are visible: Chuong Duong Bridge, which is used by motorized vehicles and Long Bien Bridge in the background (formerly Doumer Bridge). The latter was built between 1898 and 1902 by the company Dayde & Pille from Creil, and by Vietnamese workers, according to plans by Gustave Eiffel; it is 1,682 m long and its metallic armature contains nineteen spans. The bridge was considered a technical and architectural feat at the time. It suffered severe damage from American bombing between 1967 and 1971. Today, a railway track still crosses the bridge, which is also used by cyclists and pedestrians. Restoration work is planned. On the other side of the river, on the left bank, is Long Bien District (formerly Gia Lam) (*Photo: Patrick Gubry, November 2005*).

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